

A FURTHER VISIT TO SLOPERS' WORKS. Rosemary Smith.

Mr.W.E. Cokayne (apology due to this gentleman for the wrong spelling of his name in Bulletin 246) kept his promise and on August 31st again welcomed another five of our members to the Tower Royal Works of J. Sloper & Co. Ltd., Blackburn Road, West Hampstead. I feel very privileged to have been one of these five.

We were surprised at the range of types of perforating machine which are used, the majority for non-philatelic purposes. The machines for date stamping cheques and other documents were most ingenious but also very simple to use. One machine in particular was demonstrated to us with a signature as the die. These are for foreign businesses or banks who have to have two signatures to endorse a cheque. If one of the signators is out of the country on business, the cheque is perforated with his signature. (Fig.1)

Fig. 1

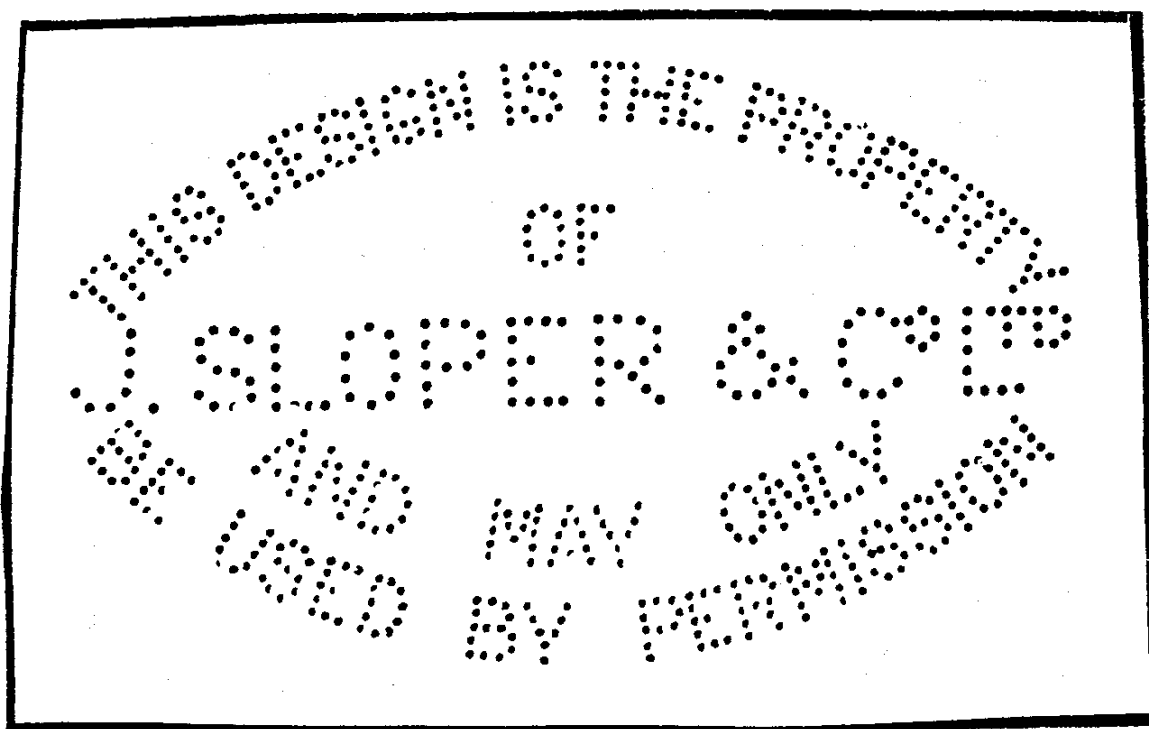
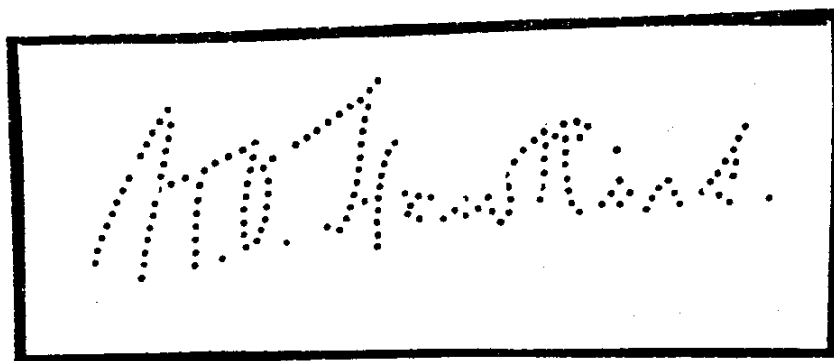


Fig. 2

Another machine had J. Slopers' own die in it and Fig.2 shows this special perforation - it is shown with their permission! They also have an American Cummins perforator.

Whilst looking at the die plates used for perforating postage stamps, I noticed four numbers which had names engraved on the plate. They were 155 (COND NAST); 159 (CHESHIRE CINEMA'S); 235 (CLARK & FENN); 246 (EVANS RANKIN). The dies are illustrated at Figs.3, 4, 5 & 6.

A die plate with the number 155 and the name COND NAST.

Fig. 3

A die plate with the number 159 and the name CHESHIRE CINEMA'S.

Fig. 4

A die plate with the number 235 and the name CLARK & FENN.

Fig. 5

A die plate with the number 246 and the name EVANS RANKIN.

Fig. 6

When I returned home I found that these 4 dies are not in the Edwards illustrated catalogue. After writing to Mr. Cokayne he very kindly checked for me and sent the following information. "The dies you have asked about are not in current use and although I have checked some old records I cannot find reference to their use." If any member can cast any light on any of these names, we may be able to track down the purpose for these dies.

We were then taken to the room where the die plates are actually made and shown how the holes are punched in the plate, the hundreds of different size matrix plates used as guides and the different size pins. This part of the works was like stepping back in time. What character! What ambience! Long may the firm retain this individual atmosphere: where you can imagine history being made back in the 1860's.

I have saved the icing on the cake until the end. Just as the visit was ending and we were stepping out of the door, Mr.Cokayne dropped his bombshell. SOME PENNY BLACKS HAD BEEN PERFINNED. Five heads spun round. In 1939, Slopers perforated some sets of stamps to celebrate executing this type of business through five reigns. The sets range from ½d plate, 1d black, 1d

Through Five Reigns

1858



1939



A UNIQUE SET of PERFORATED STAMPS
from the HISTORIC COLLECTION of
J. SLOPER & COMPANY LTD.

The Property of J. Sloper & Co. Ltd.
22, Budge Row, Cannon Street, London, E.C.4.

plate through to GVI dark colours. 16 stamps in all. They were used as gifts to special customers and friends of the then chairman of the company. I shall be eternally grateful to Mr. Cokayne for loaning me one of these presentation sets (which is in his family) to study and photocopy. After examining the set, it is obvious that the PENNY BLACK is a used copy which was perfined and I suspect that the ½d plate was also a used copy. The others are all mint stamps. Details of the stamps are as follows but the S.G. Nos. for EVII and GV are simplified as it is impossible to ascertain the correct watermark or printing.

<u>STAMP</u>	<u>S.G.No.</u>	<u>TILLES</u>	<u>PERFIN</u>	<u>USER</u>
½d plate 12	48	P411.3	PS	Pharmaceutical Soc. of G.B.
1d black B-E	2	J530	J.M/&C ^o	?
1d plate 192	43	M326.2	MJ	?
4½d Jub.	206	N103.1	ND/FS	Nat. Deposit Friendly Soc.
1d Lilac	172	W516.1	WM	Wm.T. Malcolm & Co. EC3
2d EVII	291	J609.3b	JP/&C ^o	?
3d EVII	234	W812.1	WW/Ltd	Wm.Whiteley Ltd.
5d EVII	294	R353.1	RM/SS	?
1/- EVII	314	R353.1	“	?
1d GV	341	F263.2	F&M	Fortnum & Mason Ltd. W1
1½d GV	362	J147.1	J&/CH	?
½d EVIII	457	R284.1	RI/C ^o /L ^d	Royal Insurance Co. Ltd.
2½d EVIII	460	O191.2	OU/DC	Oldbury/ØOrmskirk UDC.
½d GVI	462	New Die	RTF	?
1d GVI	463	B74.2	B/Bk	Barclays Bank Ltd.
1½d GVI	464	S481.1a	SM/BP	?

David Scott took some : photographs at Slopers' and I have taken some colour photographs of this presentation set which we will show at the meeting at B.P.H. Altogether, an unforgettable experience.

Stephen Steere is trying to arrange for a third visit to Slopers' on a Friday afternoon in November. Write to Michael Rucklidge if you are interested in being included. See Bulletin 246, bottom of page 3 for similar details. If you are interested, but a particular Friday is unsuitable, let Michael know; but remember we cannot dictate dates to Mr. Cokayne.